

The Axis of War and Mischief in the Middle East

[This article was initially posted on the August 7, 2003 issue of *Payvand.com* at <http://www.payvand.com/news/03/aug/1036.html>. It was subsequently reposted on a number of other e-journals, including <http://edstrone.blogspot.com/entry/read/176412.htm> and <http://www.bepfo.org/>. The slightly modified version was published in *Against the Current*, Vol. 13, No. 5 (November/December 2003): 26-33.]

Unquestionably, the influence of an cabal of the so-called neoconservatives, the Bush Administration has turned our world into an unsafe, the uncertain, and worrisome place. The Administration no longer disguises its intentions that the war in Iraq was only one step in its ambitious project to recast the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East—and perhaps beyond. Not only has this created insecurity and turbulence in the Middle East, it has also thrown most of the post-WW II international alliances, treaties, and institutions into disarray and confusion.

The relentless mobilization for war and militarism has also contributed to the undermining of both civil liberties and economic conditions of the overwhelming majority of the American people. While arms manufacturers are showered with massive amounts of tax dollars, nothing effective is done to stem the rising tide of unemployment and economic insecurity for the poor and working people. The disproportionate allocation of resources in favor of arms industries is directly connected to the undermining of both physical infrastructure (such as roads, bridges and ports) and soft/social infrastructure such as healthcare, education, and nutrition. Under a carefully orchestrated war atmosphere, and under the guise of a fiscal stimulus package, a huge capital-friendly tax cut is proposed that will drastically redistribute national income/resources in favor of the wealthy. Millions of Americans have witnessed their retirement savings disappear by the bear and corrupt market, and more than a million filed for bankruptcy last year alone. Unsurprisingly, then, despite the somewhat artificial and somewhat coerced patriotism, many Americans are worried about their economic situation and, like many in other parts of the world, anxious about international relations and world peace and stability.

What makes the foreign policy projections of the Bush Administration's team of neoconservatives dangerous to world peace is their self-righteous sense of being on a mission and, hence, their impatience in dealing with complex situations and their intolerance for discussion, debate, and dissent. In the face of complex foreign policy issues, requiring patient and intelligent consultation and debate, they tend to opt for preemptive/adventurous shortcuts. This strategy of Washington's war-making cabal of neoconservatives in constantly contriving new external enemies seems to be derived from the political philosophy of H. L. Mencken who maintained: "The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary." [1]

Thus, for example, in the face of legitimate questions about the alleged existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, they hurriedly invaded the country in an attempt to preempt further questions and/or a national debate on the issue. Likewise, in the wake of death and destruction in Iraq, and in the face of mounting economic problems at home, they are talking about waging war against Iran, Syria, and other countries. The Administration's war juggernaut seems to be following the logic of the proverbial bicyclist who has to keep riding forward or else he will fall over. This has meant, as the Administration's record shows, embarking on new adventures and creating new problems as a way of dealing with the existing/old ones!

The question is why? What lies behind the Administration's tendency toward a permanent state of war—pursued in the name of "preemption," "regime change," and "war on terrorism"? Official explanations such as weapons of mass destruction, Saddam's threat to the United States, or his connection to Al Qaeda, can now easily be dispensed with as flimsy, harebrained pretexts for the invasion of Iraq.

Critics have pointed to a number of driving forces/factors to war. An obvious factor is said to be the President's political need to maintain his 9/11-induced strong status as Commander-in-Chief, and his need for re-election on security/defense grounds. A second hypothesis attributes the Administration's drive to war to its desire to divert attention from corporate scandal and economic recession. Expansion of the American empire is offered as a third explanation. Control of the major sources of oil constitutes a widely cited fourth factor in the administration's drive to war.

Whatever the contributory impact of these factors, they are not, in my view, the major driving forces behind the Administration war machine. The Administration's war juggernaut, rather, seems to be driven by the alliance axis of two other forces: The Military-Industrial Complex and the Hard-line Zionist proponents of a Jewish state in the "Greater Israel" or the "Promised Land." [2] As I shall explain shortly, both of these forces perceive their interests better served by fomenting war and tension in the Middle East region. It is this convergence of interests on war and convulsion in the region that lies behind the current alliance of these two powerful forces—the title of this essay, "The Axis of War and Mischief in the Middle East," refers to this alliance.

The Alliance is represented by the cabal of closely connected individuals who are firmly ensconced in the Pentagon. They also hold powerful positions within the National Security Council, the White House, the Congress and, to a lesser extent, the State Department. Not all the members of the Cabal hold official positions in the government apparatus. They also work within and through various lobbying think tanks, unofficial interest groups, consulting/research institutes, and the media.

Some of the well-known figures of the Cabal are: Donald Rumsfeld (Secretary of Defense), Paul Wolfowitz (Under Secretary of Defense), Richard Cheney (Vice President), Richard Perle (Defense Policy Board), Douglas Feith (Defense Dept.), James Woolsey (Former Director of Central Intelligence), David Wurmser (State Dept.), William Kristol (editor, *The Weekly Standard*), Michael Laden (Elabor North's Iran/contra liaison with the Israelis), Eliot Abrams (National Security Council), Lewis Libby (Vice President Cheney's Chief of Staff), Fred Kile (Defense Policy Board), Zalmany Khalilzad (White House), David Wurmser (State Department), Dov Zakheim (Defense Department), Peter Rodman (Defense Department), Richard Armitage (State Department), Norman Podhoretz (well-known doyen of the neoconservatives), David Frum (President Bush's Speechwriter), John Bolton (State Department), Frank Gaffney (Director, Center for Security Policy), Joshua Muravchik (American Enterprise Institute), Martin Peretz (editor-in-chief, *The New Republic*), Leon Wieseltier (*The New Republic*), and former Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.).

The number of the public known think tanks through which the Alliance operate include The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), Project for the New American Century (PNAC), Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Hudson Institute, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Middle East Forum, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and Center for Security Policy (CSP).

Some of the well-known publications that support, formulate, and propagate the views of the Cabal are: *The Weekly Standard*, *The New Republic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, and the *Washington Times*.

The Role of the Military-Industrial Complex

Because I have dealt with the role of the Military-Industrial Complex in the Bush Administration's drive to war in an earlier article, I shall be brief here. [3] The theory behind the military industries' tendency to war is straightforward: peace is simply not good for the business of these industries. War, by contrast, means good business, not only in terms of production and/or sales in general, but also in terms of the industry's appropriation of a big chunk of the nation's tax dollars. [4] President Eisenhower's warning near the end of his second term against the potential dangers of the Military-Industrial Complex seems to have been prompted largely by this intrinsic tendency of the Complex towards war and militarism.

Of course, tendencies to build bureaucratic empires have always existed in the ranks of military hierarchies. By itself, this is not what makes the U.S. Military-Industrial Complex more dangerous than the military powers of the past empires. What makes it more dangerous is the "Industrial" part of the Complex. In contrast to the United States' military industry, arms industries of the past empires were not subject to capitalist market imperatives. Furthermore, those industries were often owned and operated by imperial governments, not by market-driven private corporations. Consequently, as a rule, arms production was dictated by war requirements, not by market or profit imperatives, which is often the case with today's U.S. arms industry. The fact that powerful interests within the Military-Industrial Complex derive "war dividends" from international conflicts explains why representatives of the Complex have almost always reacted negatively to discussions of international cooperation and détente (tension reduction).

Thus, for example, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Korean War and the "communist threat" were used as pretexts by the proponents of military buildup to overrule those who called for limits on military spending following the end of the World War. Representatives of the Military-Industrial Complex, disproportionately ensconced in the State and Defense Departments, succeeded in having President Truman embark on his famous overhaul of the U.S. foreign policy, which drastically increased the Pentagon budget and expanded the military-industrial establishment.

Likewise, in the face of the 1970s' tension-reducing negotiations with the Soviet Union, representatives of the Complex rallied around Cold Warrior think tanks such as the "Committee on the Present Danger" and successfully sabotaged those discussions. Instead, once again, by invoking the red scare, they managed to reinforce the relatively weakened tensions with the Soviet Union to such new heights that it came to be known as the Second Cold War—hence, the early 1980s' dramatic "rearming of America," as President Reagan put it.

Similarly, when the collapse of the Soviet system and the subsequent discussions of "peace dividends" in the United States threatened the interests of the Military-Industrial Complex, representatives of the Complex invented the "threat of rogue states to our national interests," and successfully substituted it for the "threat of communism" of the Cold War era—thereby, once again averted efforts at cutting the military spending. Indeed, proponents of military buildup did more than just coin the term "rogue states." They also moved swiftly to foment regional tensions and instigate certain states to react in a manner that would make the application of the term "rogue" to such states plausible. Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator, was the first to fall into this trap.

There is evidence that the Bush (Sr.) Administration's policy was to lead Saddam Hussein to believe that he could take over Kuwait with impunity. The purpose was to give him enough maneuvering space to cause a regional crisis, which would serve as a substitute for the waning "Soviet threat to US interests." This new "threat," in turn, would provide a new rationale for continued expansion of the Pentagon budget. [5]

Thus, long before the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, beneficiaries of war dividends were searching for "rogue states" and other pretexts to justify and further expand the Pentagon budget. The needs of these beneficiaries of "war dividends" for international convulsions helps explain why they viewed the 9/11 tragedy as an opportunity for remilitarization. The monstrous attacks of 9/11 were treated not as crimes—as they actually were—but as war on America. Once it was thus established that the United States was "at war," military buildup followed logically.

What is more, President Bush and his circle of war-making advisers have made their declared war on terrorism open-ended and permanent. It is open-ended because the President's close advisors seem to have difficulty finding terrorism by definition; that is, "by deciding unilaterally what actions around the world constitute terrorism," or by arbitrarily classifying certain countries as "supporters of terrorism," as Bill Kristol, retired CIA adviser, put it. [6] Justification of war has never been made so simple: it does not seem to require more than the mere fancy of the beneficiaries of "war dividends."

The Role of Hard-line Zionism

Just as the beneficiaries of war dividends view international peace and stability inimical to their interests, so too the hard-line Zionists perceive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors perilous to their goal of gaining control over the promised "Land of Israel." The reason for this fear of peace is that, according to a number of the United Nations' resolutions, peace would mean Israel's return to its pre-1967 borders; that is, withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But because proponents of greater Israel are unwilling to withdraw from these territories, they are therefore afraid of peace—hence, their continued efforts at sabotaging peace negotiations, including the heinous crime of assassinating the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for having signed the Oslo Peace Accord with Palestinians. By the same token, these proponents view war and convulsion (or, as David Ben-Gurion, one of the key founders of the State of Israel, put it, "revolutionary atmosphere") as opportunities that are conducive to the expulsion of Palestinians, to the territorial recasting of the region, and to the expansion of Israel's territory.

This well-known is based neither on theory, nor on conjecture, nor on simple logic. It is based on the well-judged Zionist philosophy of establishing a Jewish state in the "Promised Land." It is also based on the actual policies and practices of the leaders of the State of Israel ever since it was founded in 1948. According to that philosophy, conceived and formulated by the pioneers of modern Zionism in the late 19th century, institution of the State of Israel must be based on overwhelmingly (if not homogeneously) Jewish population. Despite the occasional public rhetoric to the contrary,

The idea of transfer [of Palestinians from their land] had accompanied the Zionist movement from its very beginnings, first appearing in Theodore Herzl's diary. In practice, the Zionists began executing a mini-transfer from the time they began purchasing the land and evacuating the Arab tenants.... "Disappearing" the Arabs lay at the heart of the Zionist dream, and was also a necessary condition of its existence....

With few exceptions, none of the Zionists disputed the desirability of forced transfer—or its morality. [7]

Because the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Palestine were not Jewish but Muslim and Christian Arabs, the question that faced the planners of a Jewish state in Palestine was, therefore, how to bring about the "necessary" expulsion of Palestinians from their land. Obviously, such expulsions could not be brought about during normal, peaceful times; war and application of force were deemed necessary for the projected expulsions. But because waging war and applying force in the name of expulsions would be politically inexcusable, instigation of diversionary/proxy wars in the region were considered necessary in order to avoid the expansionist Zionist forces of the convulsed pretext for the projected expulsions. David Ben-Gurion explained the importance of the needed social circumstances for the objective of expelling the Palestinians and expanding the Jewish territory in these words: "What is inconceivable in normal times is possible in revolutionary times; and if at this time the opportunity is missed and what is possible in such great hours is not carried out—a whole world is lost." [8]

The actual measures that were adopted for the creation of the Jewish state followed this strategy as squarely as a theatrical play following a script. Once the Zionist forces gained a foothold in Palestine as a result of Britain's issuance of the Balfour Declaration, they embarked on a path of territorial expansion that led to the 1948 war under whose cover they managed to expel 750,000 Palestinians (more than 80 percent of the indigenous population), and thus achieve an overwhelmingly Jewish state. [9]

But while the Jewish State that was thus created achieved the objective of "overwhelmingly Jewish population," it fell short of achieving the second major goal of Zionist planners: capturing the entire Palestine, the "Land of Israel," from Jordan to the Mediterranean. It remained for another war, the 1967 war, to gain control of additional land, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Occupation of additional land, however, could not this time be accompanied by the expulsion of its inhabitants. Additional territory, therefore, also meant an additional dilemma: the so-called "demographic problem." The founders of the Jewish State viewed the non-Jewish inhabitants of the occupied territories, combined with their higher rates of population growth, as a long-term threat to the ideal of "overwhelmingly Jewish state of Israel."

Years of wrenching debate over how to resolve this "dilemma" led (by the 1980s) to a major fissure in the ranks of the Israeli leaders. The realist faction, headed by the Late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his co-thinkers, gradually became convinced that the goal of capturing the entire Palestine based on the overwhelmingly Jewish population was unattainable; and that the time had arrived for Israel to consider the "land-for-peace" proposals, along with the underlying ideas of two independent, side-by-side states of Israel and Palestine. This line of thinking eventually became the basis for the so-called Oslo Peace Accord between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

The hard-line proponents of "Greater Israel" such as Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, by contrast, insisted on re-doubling the "necessary" efforts to achieve the goal of capturing the "Land of Israel," including new expulsions from the occupied territories. They acknowledged that, for the time being, certain conditions (such the important friendly relations between the United States and a number of Arab states, the large Palestinian population in the occupied territories, and the world public opinion) were not favorable to achieving this goal. But they argued that some of those conditions can be changed, including geographic boundaries and territorial configurations of a number of countries in the region. Specifically, the hard-liners

called for Israel to bring about the dissolution and fragmentation of the Arab states into a mosaic of ethnic groupings. Thinking along those lines, Ariel Sharon stated on March 24, 1988, that if the Palestinian uprising continued, Israel would have to make war on her Arab neighbors. The war, he stated, would provide "the circumstances" for the removal of the entire Palestinian population from the West Bank and Gaza and even from inside Israel proper. [10]

Ariel Sharon's idea of war "providing the circumstances" for the removal of the Palestinian people is an unmistakable revival of David Ben-Gurion's view (quoted earlier) that "revolutionary times" provide opportunities for the expulsion of Palestinians—an idea that lies at the heart of the hard-line Zionists' goal of establishing a Jewish state in the "Land of Israel." The idea that war would "provide the circumstances" for the removal of Palestinians from the occupied territories was, of course, premised on the expectation that the United States would go along with the idea and support Zionist expansionism in the event of the contemplated war.

But as long as the Soviet Union existed as the countervailing world power to the United States, this expectation was unrealistic. Under the bipolar world of the Cold War era, where the world in general and the Middle East region in particular, were divided into East-West blocs of influence, the United States simply would not act alone or antagonize its Arab/Muslim allies in the region by supporting the Zionist plan for an overall overhaul of the geography of the region. The collapse of the Soviet Union, however, removed a major obstacle to the fulfillment of that plan.

The Demise of the Soviet Union, the Convergence of Interests on War, and the Unholy Alliance

In pursuit of their goal of establishing a Jewish state in the "Land of Israel," the Zionist leaders have always tried to portray their interests as coinciding with those of the United States. By the same token, they have also always tried to portray the opponents of their expansionist policies as enemies of the United States. But, as just noted, such attempts at manipulation were not very effective during the Cold War atmosphere. In the aftermath of the Cold War era, however, those schemes began to become more effective; not because the Zionist strategists suddenly became smarter, or the U.S. policy makers in the region suddenly became more susceptible to Zionist influence. But because the interests of those policy makers (especially the interests of the Military-Industrial Complex) now converged with those of the hard-line Zionists in instigating war and convulsion in the region. [11]

As noted earlier, the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War prompted calls in the United States for "peace dividends," that is, for the curtailment and conversion of part of the military budget to civilian use. The idea behind the calls for "peace dividends" was simple: since in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union the U.S. no longer needed the colossal military apparatus of the Cold War era, part of the military budget could now safely be reallocated toward civilian uses. Frightened by the specter of peace and/or peace dividends, beneficiaries of military spending frantically sought to produce new bogies to replace the "communist threat," thereby preempting the realization of peace dividends.

In their search for substitutes for the Soviet threat of the Cold War era, proponents of militarism found a strong, well-established network of politically savvy allies: militant Zionists. Because the interests of these two powerful groups converged over concerns about war and convulsion in the Middle East, and ominously an official alliance was forged between them—ominous, because the mighty U.S. war machine was now supplemented by the unrivaled public relations capabilities of Zionism. [12] The Jewish war mongers in and around the Bush Administration who have come to be known as neoconservatives serve the interests of this alliance. "Rogue states," "war on terrorism," and "preemptive regime change" have been some of the politically useful products of the creative minds of the spin-doctors of the Alliance.

Not surprisingly, soon after the demise of the Soviet Union, representatives of the Alliance embarked on a joint offensive against a whole host of long-established international institutions and conventions, arms control treaties and, most importantly, the Oslo peace negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Instead of those long-established multilateral treaties and conventions, they now called for American unilateralism and/or militarism, along with an overhaul of the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East—an overhaul that, as Ariel Sharon put it, would eliminate the opponents of Israel's policies in the region and provide "the circumstances" for the expulsion of Palestinians (quoted earlier).

The Alliance promotes its views and plans through an extended but tightly knit Web of interlocking and/or overlapping network of influential think-tanks and lobbying entities. They include the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Hudson Institute, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Middle East Forum, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and Center for Security Policy (CSP).

Some of these lobbying think tanks and their major political players have direct Israeli connections. For example, Colonel Yigal Carmon, formerly of Israeli military intelligence, was a co-founder of the MEMRI. The other co-founder of MEMRI, Meyrav Wurmser, was a member of the Hudson Institute, while her husband, David Wurmser, headed the Middle East Studies Department of the American Enterprise Institute. Richard Perle, a major player in the neoconservative movement, was both a "resident fellow" at the American Enterprise Institute and a trustee of the Hudson Institute. [13] Focusing on two of these influential think-tanks, JINSA and CSP, Jason Vest (reporting for *The Nation*) effectively unmask "the close links among the two organizations, right-wing politicians, arms/merchants, military/industrial complexes, and Republican administrations." [14]

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War era, these think-tanks and their neo-conservative spin-doctors published a number of policy papers which clearly and forcefully advocated plans for border change, demographic change, and regime change in the Middle East. For example, in 1996 an influential Israeli think tank, Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, sponsored and published a policy document, titled "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," which argued that the Netanyahu government

should "make a clean break" with the Oslo peace process and reassert Israel's claim to the West Bank and Gaza. It presented a plan whereby Israel would "shape its strategic environment," beginning with the removal of Saddam Hussein and the installation of a Hashemite monarchy in Baghdad, to serve as a first step toward eliminating the anti-Israeli governments of Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. [15]

The document, intended as a political roadmap for the incoming government of Benjamin Netanyahu, was prepared by a "Study Group" which included Richard Perle (American Enterprise Institute, Study Group Leader), James Colbert (Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs), Douglas Feith (Feith and Zell Associates), Robert Loewenberg (President, Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies), David Wurmser (Lecturer for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies), and Meyrav Wurmser (Johns Hopkins University). The dual role that a number of these individuals play is remarkable: serving as advisor both to the Likud party/government and to President Bush's Administration (Perle is now a member of the Defense Policy Board; Feith is an Assistant Secretary of Defense; and Wurmser is special assistant to State Department chief arms control negotiator John Bolton).

In an "Open Letter to the President" (Clinton), dated 19 February 1998, a number of these lobbyists, along with a number of their cohorts in the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf, recommended "a comprehensive political and military strategy for bringing down Saddam and his regime." The letter further proposed: "It will not be easy — and the course of action we favor is not without its problems and perils. But we believe the vital national interests of our country require the United States to [adopt such a strategy]."

Among the letter's signers were the following current Bush administration officials and their cohorts: Elliott Abrams (National Security Council), Richard Armitage (State Department), John Bolton (State Department), Douglas Feith (Defense Department), Fred Kile (Defense Policy Board), Zalmany Khalilzad (White House), Peter Rodman (Defense Department), Paul Wolfowitz (Defense Department), David Wurmser (State Department), Dov Zakheim (Defense Department), Richard Perle (Defense Policy Board), Donald Rumsfeld (Secretary of Defense), William Kristol (editor, *The Weekly Standard*), Frank Gaffney (Director, Center for Security Policy), Joshua Muravchik (American Enterprise Institute), Martin Peretz (editor-in-chief, *The New Republic*), Leon Wieseltier (*The New Republic*), and former Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.). [16]

Similarities between the recommendations made in this 1998 letter to President Clinton and those made in the 1996 report to the Likud party/government of Benjamin Netanyahu are unmistakable. The only difference is that whereas the 1996 report stressed the "national interests" of Israel the 1998 letter stressed the "national interests" of the United States. [17] This is an indication of the fact that the loyalties of a number of the key handlers of the U.S. foreign policy are woefully divided. Unsurprisingly, many of these neoconservative political players have come to be "called in diplomatic and political circles the 'Israeli-firsters,'" meaning that they would always put Israeli policy, or even their perception of it, above anything else. [18]

In September 2000, another think-tank of the war mongering cabal of neoconservatives, Project for the New American Century (PNAC), issued a report, "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century," which explicitly projected an imperial role for the United States in the world over. The report specifically proposed an expanded U.S. presence in the Middle East region, using the claims against Saddam Hussein's regime as a pretext. "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein." The sponsors of the report included Richard Cheney (Vice President), Donald Rumsfeld (secretary of defense), Paul Wolfowitz (deputy secretary of defense), and Lewis Libby (Cheney's chief of staff). William Kristol, editor of the *Weekly Standard*, was also a co-author of the report. [19]

This sample evidence clearly shows that the Military-Industrial-Zionist alliance had intended to invade Iraq and recast the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East long before the 9/11 atrocities. Indeed, evidence indicates that, aside from its triggering effect, those atrocities had very little to do with such plans. The Cabal of neoconservative war mongers, as shown above, had drawn such plans long before the 9/11 attacks, but they needed pretexts and opportunities for carrying out their plans. The 9/11 atrocities provided just such an opportunity. On the one hand, the attacks provided U.S. arms industries with the substitute they were seeking for the Soviet threat in the aftermath of the Cold War in order to justify the rising Pentagon spending. On the other hand, they provided militant Zionism with the convulsive circumstances that would avail them of the opportunities to carry out their expulsion and settlement plans. Furthermore, as Stephen J. Sniegoski, points out:

In the eyes of Israel's leaders, the September 11 attacks had joined the United States and Israel together against a common enemy. And that enemy was not in far-off Afghanistan but was geographically close to Israel. Israel's traditional enemies would now become America's as well. And Israel would have a better chance of dealing with the Palestinians under the cover of "a war on terrorism." [20]

Not surprisingly, immediately after the 9/11 attacks, representatives of the Military-Industrial-Zionist alliance began calling for war not just against Osama Bin Laden and/or Al Qaeda but also against a number of countries that allegedly supported or harbored terrorists. Thus, on September 20, 2001, the neoconservative strategists of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) sent a letter to President Bush arguing that the "war on terrorism" must also include punitive measures against Iraq, Iran, and Syria:

It may be that the Iraqi government provided assistance in some form to the recent attack [of 9/11] on the United States. But even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack, any strategy aimed at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Failure to undertake such an effort will constitute an early and perhaps decisive surrender in the war on international terrorism.... We believe the administration should demand that Iran and Syria immediately cease all military, financial, and political support for Hezbollah and its operations. Should Iran and Syria refuse to comply, the administration should consider appropriate measures of retaliation against these known state sponsors of terrorism. [21]

The letter's signatories included William Kristol, Gary Bauer, Eliot Cohen, Michael Deeter, Francis Fukuyama, Frank Gaffney, Eli Jacobs, Michael Joyce, Donald Kaghan, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Charles Krauthammer, Richard Perle, Martin Peretz, Norman Podhoretz, Randy Scheuermann, Stephen J. Solarz, Leon Wieseltier, and Marshall Wittmann.

In the 29 October 2002 issue of the *Weekly Standard*, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, two of the leading figures of the neoconservative cabal, reveal more of the Cabal's plan of changing regimes and reestablishing a new world order:

When all is said and done, the conflict in Afghanistan will be to the war on terrorism what the North Africa campaign was to World War II: an essential beginning on the path to victory. But compared with what looms over the horizon—a wide-ranging war in locales from Central Asia to the Middle East and, unfortunately, back again to the United States—Afghanistan will prove but an opening battle.... But this war will not end in Afghanistan. It is going to spread and engulf a number of countries in conflicts of varying intensity. It could well require the use of American military power in multiple places simultaneously. [22]

This ominous projection of another world war was made more explicit by Eliot Cohen three weeks later in a *Wall Street Journal* article, titled "World War IV":

Osama bin Laden's War?... A less palatable but more accurate name is World War IV. The Cold War was World War III.... The enemy in this war is not "terrorism,"...but militant Islam. The enemy has an ideology, and an hour spent surfing the Web will give the average citizen at least the kind of insights that he might have found during World Wars I and III by reading "Mein Kampf" or the writings of Lenin, Stalin or Mao. [23]

Professor Cohen is not alone in this portrayal of radical Islam as "the enemy," the "threat to Western values," and the culprit in "the clash of civilizations." His ideological cohorts in crafting this insidious theory include: Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes, Samuel Huntington, Charles Krauthammer, and a whole host of other co-thinkers. [24]

Defining the President's Mission

As shown earlier, the neoconservative strategists set out to place their plans of militarism and regime change on the U.S. foreign policy agenda soon after the demise of the Soviet Union; that is, under Presidents Bush Sr. and Clinton. Despite certain concessions to the demands of the neoconservatives, both Presidents stopped short of fully complying with those demands. With the arrival of their candidate, Bush Jr., in the White House, however, neoconservative strategists redoubled their efforts to force U.S. foreign policy. As they competed with the traditional, multilateral approach to foreign policy, favored by State Department's Colin Powell, in order to win the President over to their policy of unilateralism, neoconservative strategists began to define foreign policy issues and objectives in religious, missionary, and mythical terms. As James P. Pinkerton (of the *New York Newsday*) puts it, the neoconservatives "word-creations, such as "moral clarity," "axis of evil" and "Bush Doctrine," spread far and wide. These word-weavings were repeated over and over again, in magazines, books and cable news shows. Bush became Winston Churchill, Saddam Hussein became Hitler, the Arabs were ripe for Americanization, and the U.S. military became the sword not only of vengeance, but also of do-gooding and nation-building. [25]

Not accidentally, the strategy of couching foreign policy in missionary terms worked. As a born-again Christian, and as someone with little patience for nuances and gray areas, the President was energized once he was told to view his international responsibilities as "missions." The missionary approach was further reinforced by the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. As Stephen Sniegoski put it, "Neoconservatives have presented the September 11 atrocities as a lightning bolt to make President Bush aware of his destiny: destroying the evil of terrorism." Norman Podhoretz, one of the neoconservative strategists, gleefully describes the "transfigured" President:

A transformed — or, more precisely, a transfigured — George W. Bush appeared before us. In an earlier article, I suggested, perhaps presumptuously, that out of the blackness of smoke and very fiery fire its own, lit up the recesses of Bush's mind and heart and soul. Which is to say that, having previously been unsure as to why he should have been chosen to become President of the United States, George W. Bush now knew that the God to whom, as a born-again Christian, he had earlier committed himself had put him in the Oval Office for a purpose. He had put him there to lead a war against the evil of terrorism. [26]

Having helped define the President's "mission," the neoconservative cabal took the most advantage of the thus energized President. By deliberately couching their nefarious objectives in missionary terms, and repeatedly defining their enemies, real or imaginary, in biblical language ("axis of evil, evil-doers, good vs. evil, day of reckoning," and the like), they had no difficulty getting the President to carry out their agenda, including the invasion of Iraq. Whether in light of the less-than successful mission in Iraq, along with all the underlying instances of deception, disinformation, and political scandal, the President will continue to (or can) carry out the rest of the neoconservatives' plan of "World War IV" beyond Iraq remains to be seen.

In Summary

Two major forces are behind the Bush Administration's policy of war and mischief in the Middle East. They are (a) the Military-Industrial Complex, and (b) the Zionist proponents of establishing a Jewish state in the "Land of Israel." The perceived interests of both of these forces converge on the promotion of war and convulsion in the region. It is this convergence of interests on war that explains the unholy alliance between representatives of these two ominously powerful interest groups.

Militant Zionists, striving to capture the "Land of Israel," have always tried to portray opponents of their policies of expulsion and expansion as enemies of the United States, and to thereby get the U.S. military force to fight and/or support their wars of territorial expansion. Under the bipolar world of the Cold War era, however, the United States needed its Arab/Muslim "allies" in the Middle East, which meant that, in its support of Israel, the U.S. could not at the time afford to abandon those allies and comply with the Zionist demands of regime and/or border change in the region.

But the collapse of the Soviet system and the end of the Cold War changed this geopolitical scenario. As noted earlier, the end of the Cold War prompted the Military-Industrial Complex to seek substitutes for the "Soviet threat" in order to maintain the continued exception of Pentagon spending. And as representatives of the arms industries thus sought substitutes for the Soviet threat of the Cold War era, they found in radical Islam, long promoted by a number of theoretical leaders of militant Zionism and their ideological cohorts as a major "threat to Western civilization," an apparently plausible candidate. [27] Henceforth, the interests of militant Zionists in fighting "radical Islam" converged with those of the U.S. military industries—hence, the alliance of the Military-Industrial Complex and hard-core Zionists. The cabal of neoconservative warmongers in and around the Bush Administration largely represents this alliance.

Once radical Islam is thus portrayed as the "source of international conflicts," the "substitute for the Soviet threat," and the "menace to Western civilization," preemptive measures to counter such a threat follow logically. The neoconservatives' case for "World War IV" (going beyond Iraq to Iran, Syria...) rests on this logic. [28]

What can be done to rein in the dangerously unbridled neoconservative war makers?

There is no doubt that the neoconservatives' adventurous foreign policy is a threat to world peace and stability. There is also no doubt that their policies are also menacing U.S. citizens' civil liberties, undermining their social safety net programs, curtailing the working people's rights and opportunities, plundering national resources, and creating a huge fiscal strain. Equally there is no question that the neoconservatives' pyrrhic success—so far—in sniping the U.S. foreign policy, including the invasion of Iraq, has benefited from heavy doses of deception, disinformation, and Machiavellian manipulations.

The question, rather, is: how long can the cabal of neoconservatives get away with telling so many lies, committing so many crimes, and doing so much damage—both domestically and internationally? External/international resistance to the neoconservatives' adventures will obviously help. But the crucial, restraining opposition has to come from within, that is, from the American people. Such opposition to neoconservatives' destructive policies is bound to unfold. There are strong indications that, as Eric Margolis points out, "The longer U.S. forces stay in Iraq, the uglier the guerrilla war will get. And the more Americans will realize they were led into this needless conflict by a [President] manipulated by a cabal of neo-conservatives whose primary loyalty is not to the United States." [29]

There is hope that as the American people realize that their sons and daughters are losing their lives because some policy makers lied, or that they are losing their jobs and livelihood because their national resources are squandered on the production of the means of destruction, they will demand the kind of accountability that will go some way to make the perpetrators of war and deception pay for their destructive policies.

1. As cited by Carlton Meyer, <<http://www.g4int.com/May2003.htm>>.

2. It is important to distinguish between hard-line/militant and moderate Zionists. While almost all Zionists would say that they dream of living in Palestine, they greatly differ over what this really means. Generally speaking, two broad approaches have evolved on this issue: the moderate or the hard-line approaches. Moderate Zionists do not deny the right of non-Jews to live in Palestine. They favor the idea of accommodation and peaceful coexistence with the non-Jewish natives of Palestine, either as a democratic, federal state, or as two independent states. Accordingly, they support the idea of forced occupation of land, expulsion of indigenous people, and the establishment of a Jewish state based on exclusively or overwhelmingly Jewish population. Albert Einstein is the most well-known proponent of this approach. Hard-core Zionists, by contrast, aim at capturing the "entire Palestine," the "Promised Land," stretching from Jordan to the Mediterranean, and establishing a state there based on exclusive or overwhelming majority of Jewish people. Accordingly, they advocate the policy of physical expulsion of the Palestinians from this "Promised Land." "The iron wall," a phrase put forward by Ze'ev Jabotinsky in the 1920s, as the appropriate policy for the Jewish state in Palestine, succinctly captures this approach. It is this approach of Zionism, the hard-line approach, that I criticize in this essay.

3. That earlier article, "Behind the Drive to War: Bush's Escalating Military Budget," can be viewed at <<http://www.counterpunch.org/zach1025.htm>>. My brief discussion of the issue here consists largely of excerpts and paraphrases from that earlier article.

4. Excluding the elusive costs of the military adventure in Iraq, the official Pentagon budget for the fiscal year 2004 will amount to nearly \$400 billion, the highest it was in the Federal budget. (Officially, military spending is the second highest item in the Federal budget after Social Security payments. But Social Security is a self-financing trust fund. So, in reality, military spending is the highest budget item.) In fact, if the social security trust fund is excluded from the Federal budget, as it should be, the military budget will be more than one-third of the entire Federal budget.

5. Evidence of this strategy is overwhelming, especially in light of the subsequent U.S. Congressional hearings on the issue. For example, an official message delivered to Saddam Hussein by the US Ambassador April Glaspie on 25 July 1990, just days before the invasion of Kuwait, pointed out: "We have no opinion on... conflicts like your border dispute with Kuwait.... Secretary of State James Baker has directed our official spokesmen to emphasize this instruction: 'I have direct instructions from the President.'" (For these and more evidence see, among other sources, *International Viewpoint*, No. 200, February 18, 1991, p. 4; Douglas Kelner, *The Persian Gulf TV War*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1992; and James Kidgway (ed.), *The March to War*, 1991).

6. "The Disastrous Foreign Policies of the United States," *Counterpunch*, May 9, 2002. <<http://www.counterpunch.org/christiano0806.html>>.

7. Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), pp. 404-5. As quoted in Stephen J. Sniegoski, "The War on Iraq: Conceived in Israel," <http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/04/03/ditch-snieg_conc2.htm>; (c) *Herald Tribune*, December 1999; see, e.g., Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: 1982-1998: Nur Masalha,*